

*Ireland vol 16*

OBSERVATIONS  
ON THE  
UNION,  
ORANGE ASSOCIATIONS,  
AND OTHER  
*SUBJECTS OF DOMESTIC POLICY:*  
WITH  
REFLECTIONS ON THE LATE EVENTS ON THE  
CONTINENT.

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(OF LINCOLN'S INN) BARRISTER AT LAW.

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## OBSERVATIONS,

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**I** DO not undertake to write a formal treatise upon the Union, much less to exhaust so extensive and important a subject; my sole intention is to submit to the public judgment some few reflections which have occurred to me. I signed the resolutions for an Union in the county in which I reside, and I wish to explain the motives which led me to that step.

I write in concert with no man; I do not know that the point of view in which I see the subject is that of any other person. These arguments will, perhaps, please no party in this divided country; I am content if they do no mischief: but as a mode of argument of a new species has been introduced, unknown to Aristotle or the most subtle of the schoolmen, that of bawling out Rebel whenever a man is perplexed for an answer; I shall take notice, before I conclude, of this extraordinary weapon of political warfare. In the mean time, the reader will permit me to rest satisfied with the consciousness of my innocence. There are a number of topics which

I shall wholly omit, that deserve to be attentively considered before a person comes to a decision upon the subject of an Union. It ought to be examined how such a measure may affect our commerce—how the comforts of life may suffer by the increase of taxes—how money may be withdrawn from the country by the absence of considerable proprietors—in what degree our growing manufactures may lose or gain by this change in our condition;—and it will be proper to compare the possible detriment which may be apprehended under any of these heads, with the benefit which I conceive will accrue. I repeat it, I have no other view in what I write but to exhibit the subject to the Irish public under an aspect which may possibly have escaped them. I have no interest but in common with every Irishman—the prosperity of my country.

If, upon a mature consideration of the subject, viewing it in all its lights, you shall think an Union with Great Britain detrimental, in God's name oppose it; but do not bring a rash intemperate disposition of mind to the discussion; do not suffer the best of passions, a zeal for your country, to be made the instrument of private ambition or private spleen; do not confirm the charge which has been frequently made against you, that you are equally light and precipitate in approving and condemning. Be not misled by the mock enthusiasm of men who were yesterday the most servile of courtiers, and would to-day pass for the warmest and most disinterested of patriots.

patriots. It has often been observed, that nations are frequently the dupes of a word, of a fashion, of some prevailing humour and caprice, which dexterous politicians have been lucky enough seasonably to hit, and use for their purpose. Thus in a neighbouring country, we have seen the name of Republic and Liberty kindle enthusiasm among the slaves of the most flagitious despotism that ever scourged mankind; and soldiers torn from their homes by the iron hand of oppression, rush into the field in defence of those very men who sent them to be butchered, whilst they ground their families to the dust.

Have Irishmen any share in that government which they are so anxious to support? Are they not seduced by the specious phrases of national independence and imperial greatness, to maintain the domination of a few, who have for a century scourged them with all the bitterness of enmity and prejudice? I would observe the greatest decorum in my expressions. I would not imitate the conduct of the opponents of the Union, who have adopted the language of insult to the Minister whom they have for years been in the habits of supporting, and railed at the English nation, in expressions little short of the acrimony of sedition, while they confessed that upon our connexion with it our prosperity essentially depended. I would fly from the persecuting spirit of our present rulers to the government of an enlightened and unprejudiced people; but I do not forget that they are my rulers still. I hope, therefore, I shall



shall observe due caution and circumspection in my language, if, while they exhort us to cling to their government, as to the model of human legislation, with all the zeal of patriotism, I venture to express a doubt whether it has been as exemplary as they would represent it.

It is an observation which must strike every person who has travelled on the continent of Europe, that the condition of the lower orders of our people is much inferior to that of the subjects of the worst forms of government. We are said to enjoy the blessings of the British constitution. Experience, confirming the conclusions of theory, has shown the British constitution to be the noblest model of legislation that ever was devised by man. When we contemplate Great Britain, we contemplate a noble spectacle; we see a small island, with a population comparatively inconsiderable, by the mere force of its polity and laws, rising to a degree of wealth and power which places it at the head of the European nations. Whether we look at the face of the country, or consider the character of its people, we see effects answerable to the boasted excellency of its government; plenty flourishing in its fields, neatness and a kind of rural elegance smiling in its cottages, its ports crowded with ships, and its streets resounding with the busy hum of contented industry; justice presides in its councils, valour animates the exertions of its seamen and soldiers, probity is the characteristic of its merchants, sturdy independence  
glows

glows on the brow of its peasantry. Revolve the annals of history, cast your eyes on the most celebrated republics of antiquity, you see nothing like Great Britain; their wild and irregular liberty could not maintain itself without many of the maxims and institutions of despotism; an outrageous and frequently corrupted populace was the sovereign; their insolent clamours often hurried the most upright and deserving citizens to exile and to death; they banished Cicero, and they reared the ambitious designs of Cæsar. No man could say with confidence, "I shall enjoy in my old age the acquisitions of my youth; at my death I shall leave to my children what a life of honest and persevering industry has obtained." What can equal the strict and impartial justice of the British tribunals, where the meanest individual has his claims fairly tried, and the meanest offender is protected by all the punctilious nicety of forms, and all the subtleties of legal interpretation? I have observed the face of the country in England, and the character of its people.

What a painful contrast does Ireland exhibit! I might here dip my pencil in the blackest colours, and exercise my talents in painting the most gloomy scenes; I might spread out a picture of wretchedness, such as can be equalled in Europe only by the desolated plains of La Vendée\*. But I should display an idle parade of eloquence,

\* One of the commissioners of French despotism, writing to his wicked masters, describes with a terrible energy this once flourishing province; "It is," he says, "a heap of ashes moistened"



eloquence, which might inflame the passions instead of instructing the understanding, and there is not one

"ened with blood." Good God! is this the picture of a country under the influence of liberty? Is it to see this unhappy island reduced to the situation of La Vendée, that we are to encounter all the dangers, that we are to endure all the calamities of a revolution? It is true, the admirers of the late events in France cannot think of liberty without thinking of blood and slaughter. There was a seditious song read in the course of the state trials, in London, written in this taste: I do not exactly remember the words, but I know the tree of liberty was to be watered with blood; as blood is its water, murder is the fruit of this fatal tree. When Citizen David exercises his pencil upon an allegorical representation of Liberty, according to the French notion of it, he will, no doubt, choose for his model one of the drunken Poissardes, whom he has often seen with frantic looks and dishevelled hair, with a reeking dagger in one hand, and a bottle of brandy in the other, bestriding the pale and mangled carcase which her desperate fury had levelled with the dust. I confess I cannot accommodate myself to this image of liberty.—I have been hitherto accustomed to associate with that cherished name, the ideas of beauty, health, and joy, of whatever is lovely and delightful in the creation. The Genius of civil discord is represented in Virgil, bound with a hundred fetters, and muttering threats of impious vengeance with his blood-stained lips; but if this sweetest and most elegant of poets had employed his beautiful genius in singing the goddesses that once blessed his country, he would have done it, methinks, in other notes; we should have seen her, in his lays, arrayed in smiles and attended by the Graces; flowers would have sprung up under her feet; at her appearance the heavens would have assumed a brighter flush; the verdure of the fields a fresher tint: he would have studied to improve upon the picture of fertility and gladness, which his predecessor Lucretius exhibited in celebrating the goddesses of love and beauty.

*Te Dea, te fugiunt venti, te nubila cœli,  
Adventumque tuum tibi suavis Dædala tellus  
Submittit flores, tibi rident æquora ponti,  
Placatumque nitet diffuso lumina cœlum.*

Take my translation for want of a better.

*Thee, Goddess, thee, the winds tempestuous fly;  
At thy approach the clouds forsake the sky;  
Earth, curious artist, pours forth at thy feet  
Each fruit nectareous, and each balmy sweet;  
Old Ocean smiles, while thin diffusive light  
Wraps the sooth'd heavens and softens on the sight.*



of my readers who has taken a ride a few miles from the capital who could not add fresh strokes to my picture, however I might load the features and heighten the colouring.

It is natural to inquire how this happens, whence this extraordinary contrast in two islands separated only by a few miles of sea. Does a pestilential air breathe in our atmosphere, which blasts vegetation and mars the exertions of human industry?—More salubrious suns do not shine upon the human race than what Providence has bestowed upon Ireland. Perhaps, the soil is cursed by an invincible and untractable barrenness:—Its fertility contends with the indolence of the labourer, and its yellow harvests wave their heads around the falling mansion of the half-starved peasant. Perhaps it is surrounded by what Sallust calls *mare importuosum*, and agriculture declines, having no means of being fed by foreign commerce:—Its ports open on every side their deep and capacious bosoms, and Providence seems to have designed it to be the centre of the commerce of a world. What then is the secret spring which has raised Great Britain to unrivalled greatness?—and why with every advantage of nature does Ireland languish at the side of her proud and imperial sister?

This is a nice question; I touch it with a trembling hand. It requires the keenest eye to see the causes of national elevation and depression. We ought to be particularly distrustful of our speculations

in this age of ready and ignorant speculation, when every coffee-house politician thinks he has discovered what escaped a Montesquieu or a Burke; but I think we may offer a reasonable guess, if we attentively consider the Parliaments of England and Ireland. I speak of the House of Commons, which is the most important part of the Legislature, and gives the impulse to the whole.

The English House of Commons is not fashioned according to any system or theory; but in point of fact it unites in its bosom the representatives of all the classes of men in the community: it therefore sympathizes with the feelings, and speaks the opinions of a miscellaneous people. Is a commercial question agitated? it reckons in its numbers the most opulent and respectable merchants of the country; so the greatest landed proprietors deliberate upon every point interesting to its agriculture. In my opinion, the English House of Commons is the fairest representative of the public opinion that can be contrived. Divide the whole island into districts, you throw all the returns into mob-elections; you exclude all sober, quiet men, all studious, reclusive characters, all men of large property, indolent and fastidious from their property, who could not endure the vexations of a popular contest; and if they prevailed upon themselves to enter the lists, would be constantly overcome by noisy, specious demagogues, with fluent tongues and empty heads; property would want its due weight;  
commerce

commerce and agriculture in their most important branches would not be represented ; no part of the nation would be represented but the tribe of enterprising wits and idle talkers, the destruction of every country that is governed by their councils : I am convinced this is one of the great immediate causes of the misfortunes of France. I conclude from all these observations the great cause of the prosperity of England is the intimate connexion that subsists between the measures of the House of Commons and the feelings and opinions of every class of the people, infomuch that the proceedings of the one have not for any length of time varied from the confirmed sentiments of the other. Every order of subjects has in the bosom of the Legislature its most considerable members who espouse its cause, sympathize in its feelings, and speak its opinions. This is what I call a true representation of the people, and not any of those fanciful schemes which, through the medium of a pretended popular election, would throw the whole power into the hands of one set of men, perhaps the most shining, certainly the least useful of the various classes into which a great community is divided.

Does this kind of representation exist in Ireland ? Do our representatives, as they are called, sympathize with the feelings and opinions of the great body of the nation ? Can the national pulse be felt through its acts ?



For a century past the great body of the nation has been an object of jealousy, suspicion, hatred mixed with contempt, to its rulers; on one side are numbers, on the other are property and dominion. —Property and dominion must necessarily regard numbers with a jealous eye; hence all the angry passions, all the bitter rancorous prejudices which arise from fear. These causes of separation and hostility between property and numbers are further heightened by difference in religious opinions; add to this, the belief of concealed claims which animates the hopes of the one party, and aggravates the fears of the other. A long course of severe persecuting measures has reduced the bulk of the people to the lowest degree of ignorance and wretchedness; this has given to hatred the poignancy of contempt. From ignorance and wretchedness has arisen a plundering rapacious spirit, which has produced fresh animosity, manifesting itself in new pains and penalties, which, whilst they seem to apply correctives to the effects, inflame the cause of these disorders.

Perhaps Ireland is the only country in the world where such a complete separation subsists between the governors and the governed. In England the public opinion is the law, and acts of authority are little more than emanations of what the most sober and respectable part of the community have already approved in their thoughts. In Ireland there is no public opinion, or if there is a faint resemblance of one, it is the opinion of those who are most eager  
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to push violent measures against the bulk of the nation. A man rises in estimation among the ruling party, and acquires honours by expressing hatred and contempt of the majority of his countrymen. There is the form of the British constitution, but there is not what makes the British constitution the most beautiful contrivance of government that ever blessed mankind; there is a House of Commons, but is it a House of Commons arising from the bosom of the community; composed miscellaneously of every class of the people, blended in feeling and opinion with the people, and therefore speaking the public voice? The body of the society seems scarcely to belong to the society, but as the Helots of Sparta belonged to their masters; they are cutters of turf and drawers of water, scarce members of the community. So far from there being connexion of feeling and sentiment between them and the assembly enacting laws, there is a perpetual contest of malevolence between them; the subject is intent upon doing as much mischief as he can by fraud and plunder; the governor meditates only upon plans of vengeance and constraint. We see the consequences; a fertile country presents on every side the picture of squalid wretchedness, and the subjects of the noblest form of government in the world, enjoy fewer comforts than those of the worst. This has hitherto been admitted as an indisputable fact; indeed, a man need only take a short ride in the country to be convinced of this melancholy truth. It is only lately and for a certain purpose  
that



that certain eyes have been able to discover the venerable image of public prosperity reposing in the deserted shop of the ruined manufacturer, in the smoky hut of the half-starved peasant. One would think, from certain speeches, that a fairy had waved her wand over this land, and had wrought a change, such as we read in the Arabian Nights Entertainments, had converted a desolate moor into a magnificent garden. Instead of being proverbial for poverty and wretchedness, we have suddenly started up a rich and prosperous people; they who some months ago would have cut our throats, are now our dearest benefactors; and the VENERABLE CHIEF who interposed his laurels between us and *their* fury, oppresses us by his clemency and persecutes us by his mercy. They who can believe this miraculous revolution, let them: I am of the opinion of Pope Lambertini—*i miracoli già son passati fra noi*. Supposing that no supernatural power has intervened, and that the country is as it was some months ago, I shall consider the remedies that have been proposed for the evils which till this time were thought to exist.

Some young gentlemen who have become great statesmen, as some officers in the guards in Swift's time, discovered that there was no God by the mere force of their natural talents, without any assistance of human learning, have proposed to us independence under the mild and beneficent protection of the French republic; and there are not wanting honest



nest Irishmen, who secretly worship this notion in the concealed sanctuary of their hearts. It may be thought time mispent to bestow any attention on a sentiment which it is a crime to entertain; but no labour is thrown away which is employed in removing well-meaning error, and correcting the delusion of virtuous hearts. I hope to prove, that independence would be the most fatal present which Providence could make us in its anger.

I will suppose, that by a miracle as extraordinary as I have before mentioned, the wish of our malcontents was accomplished; that Ireland, instead of being separated by a narrow sea from Great Britain, was placed in the middle of the Atlantic, and erected into an independent power. In the first place, she would have them to provide for her own defence; the fleets of the sister kingdom would not then guard our coasts, nor her armies be ready to repel invasion. The great statesmen with whom I venture to argue, as they are not yet in possession of supreme power, like their worthy brethren in France \*, have perhaps forgotten, in the transcendent magnificence of their conceptions, that there are states in the world possessed of considerable naval and military strength, that the golden age is

\* If, unfortunately, this was the case, if we were governed by an Irish Directory, instead of our present excellent Viceroy, I should not venture to contest any point with these gentlemen: I too well remember the observation of a Roman philosopher, who would not be victorious in argument against the master of twenty legions.

not returned, nor ambition and avarice eradicated from the minds of men. Suppose that virtuous patriot Barras, or that profound metaphysician Syeyes, should take a fancy to Ireland, as, in kindness to the Grand Signior, they proposed to reform, or, as they express it, to regenerate Egypt, where would these sublime statesmen find fleets to oppose the landing of their bare-breeched Myrmidons? Where could they find armies to fight them after they were landed? Where would they find generals to command such armies if found, or are they prepared for the *mild, paternal* government of a French commissioner? They certainly might hope to find favour in his eyes; they would have the merit of rebellion against their lawful sovereign; they had destroyed property and industry; they had deluged their country in blood, and subjected it to a foreign force; but a participation in crimes does not always propitiate criminals. In the course of the French revolution, as high-flyers as themselves have been brought down to the slider of the guillotine. A life of infamy could not protect the Duke of Orleans; and Robespierre was hurried to execution, though he had the blood of thousands upon his head. But supposing Ireland should escape this great calamity, and not become the subjugated province of a foreign power; granting that the French Directors did not condescend to reform and enlighten us, what should we do in our independence? Did power and dominion remain in the same hands; did no change take place in the state of property, then all  
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the evils I have enumerated would continue to oppress us, and with double virulence, the controlling and mitigating influence of Great Britain being removed.

But this is not the intention of the projectors of independence; they do not mean to give us a barren unproductive independence—confiscation and plunder are to follow in its train; an ignorant, rapacious, cruel populace are to be let loose, and all the property in the country to be swallowed in one whirlpool of confiscation and plunder. I suppose I need not comment upon this state of things, to prove it would not be beneficial to any order of men: the confiscators would not long enjoy the fruits of their rapacity; the principle of property being once torn up by the roots, would not shoot up again at the pleasure of the new proprietors. One set of robbers would succeed another; all productive industry would be extinguished in this contest of violence; and the temporary enjoyment of the few comforts of life which would remain, would be procured only by the longest and sharpest sword; the little commercial industry and wealth which has sprung up, notwithstanding the discouragements of the times, would be swept away, and desolated Ireland would add to the melancholy examples which history exhibits, that injustice is never policy, and that the nation which thinks to prosper by crimes, will find they terminate in its destruction.



Every Irishman who has any regard for his country, indeed every man who does not avow himself a robber by system, must shrink from such a prospect. There is not in the stores of divine wrath such a curse as what is called French protection, and this is the price we must pay for independence—we can have it by no other means. We are certainly a miserable people, but our misery would be increased tenfold by such a change in our condition. The poor peasant amidst his wretchedness and poverty clings to his religion; it is the prop of his hopes in life;—it is his consolation in death. What would be his condition if this small cheering ray were withdrawn from the chill gloom of his hut—if he saw all the places of worship (in which one day in the week he forgot his own wretchedness in the splendour of the altar) shut up by the orders of the French commissioner—all the objects of the fond belief of his heart treated with profanation and scorn by the fanatics of infidelity \*—if, when he could a little understand the language of his new masters, his ears were daily stunned by a parcel of hair-dressers babbling the jargon of an impious philosophy?

I have said it—this is not the concern only of one order of men. Every arm should be ready to assist the magistrate against those who would plunge

\* There is a remarkable passage mentioned in the works of D'Alembert. He says it is a question deserving the most serious attention of philosophers, whether infidelity might not produce fanaticism as well as religion? The French have given a practical solution of this moral problem.

their country into such calamities ; every tongue should utter the accents of execration. It is the cause of the poor as well as of the rich ;—the rich have property to preserve—the poor have property to acquire. All men are equally interested in maintaining the security of property ; property is the source from which flow all the streams that fertilize a country \* ; it is the incentive to all industry, the sharpener of all talent. Man is naturally an indolent animal : were it not for the pressure of want and the prospect of enjoying something which he might call his own, he would sink down in a stupid lethargy, and sleep till death. This prospect is held out to him by the laws of property ; to maintain these, societies coalesced, magistrates were appointed : all the institutions of civil life take their rise from this origin.

Property is preserved by impartially respecting every acquisition of human industry. The blow which is given at the top vibrates to the bottom ; and the same violence which dispossesses the great man of his palace, affects the security of the meanest tenant of the poorest hut.

\* I must ever lament that I was not present in the British House of Commons when our illustrious countryman Mr. Burke entered into the discussion of the advantages resulting to mankind from the principle of property blended with the social union ; a discussion which he adorned with that rich and philosophical imagination (an apt and characteristic expression, I think of Gibbon, in speaking of this great man) which particularly distinguished him.



From a due consideration of these principles, Cicero observes, that the lowest mechanic considered his little shop and the rude instruments of his simple labour as aimed at by the conspiracy of Catiline; besides, an example of violence even in the highest part of the state cuts off all the hopes of the poor man, and represses all his industry; he is, therefore, in the deepest manner interested in the public tranquillity. He will not endeavour to extricate himself from his poverty by sober persevering exertion, unless he can look forward to secure enjoyment as the end of his labours; and this prospect is entirely intercepted from his view when he sees the higher places in the society to which his industry aspired, seized upon by lawless force and daring rapine. It follows from all these observations, that war to the palace, and peace to the cottage, is no less the shout of folly than the cry of knavery; they both stand upon the same foundation, one cannot fall without the other's tottering. The violence which immediately preys upon the rich, affects the poor in their security, in their prospects, in all the motives which call forth their talents and stimulate their industry.

I have often reflected upon an observation of Dr. Johnson, as it appeared to me to suggest the true distinction between the partisans of the French revolution. The conversation happened to turn upon the controversy which was started by some eloquent wits and foolish retailers of paradoxes, whether the rudeness of the savage state was not preferable to the



elegance of polished life :—"Rouffeau," said he, "writes too well, and is too clever a fellow, to believe what he says ; but I am afraid that poor Monboddo believes it."

It cannot be doubted, there are some retailers of French principles, who, like poor Monboddo, believe what they say, who repeat the names of Liberty and Republic, without guile, in pure simplicity of heart ; who firmly believe that sober commercial industry would prosper under the auspices of Barras, and depend upon the piety of l'Abbé Sieyes to promote their particular form of Christianity. Whilst we shudder at the consequences of this delusion, we cannot regard these wretched fanatics without some mixture of pity. The most absurd zealots \* of the most absurd religion never brought to the most extravagant tenets of their religion such an orthodox absence of reason and discernment as distinguish these men who call themselves philosophers. They who believe that dying with a cow's tail in one's hand is a sure mean of salvation,

\* Yet such is human frailty, that these bigots, like other devotees, have sometimes deviated into heresy. They are orthodox in the principle, though heretical in the particular instance. The same hostility to human reason marks their occasional disbelief as distinguishes their general credulity. For some years past, the reader cannot forget there has been a regular declaration promulgated every year by the rulers of unfortunate France, that their immediate predecessors were a parcel of scoundrels, and their government a villanous tyranny ; but our fanatics, who believe them in every thing else, will not believe them in one they might be supposed to know best—their own slavish condition, and the profligacy of their associates.

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are bold and sagacious sceptics compared to them. What doctrine is not a man prepared to swallow who places any confidence in any of those dull pamphlets which are annually published in France under the title of Constitutions \* ?

There is another description of men for whose understanding I have a due respect ; I cannot charge them with any simplicity of heart or easiness of belief. They are not the dupes of the jargon which they preach ; the names of Liberty and Independence they think convenient for their purposes, but their views are fixed upon quite different objects. I speak of those bold enterprising spirits who cannot bear the languor and listlessness of a quiet life ; they are not at all satisfied with the portion of wealth and

\* I heard a gentleman say he was some time ago at a table d'hôte in Paris. The company talked with much warmth a great deal of (Gallicè) galimathias (Anglicè nonsense) upon Liberty, Equality, the Rights of Man, &c. In the course of the conversation a little ill-looking fellow who was particularly vociferous, a ci-devant Abbé, to give the weight of authority to his sentiments, and command a respectful deference, not indeed from his auditory (for nobody listened, they were all talking), but from his company, observed—*J'ai travaillé moi à quatorze constitutions.*

I suppose there is not a pert little scribbler in Paris who has not had a hand in some *Constitution*, though l'Abbé Sieyès is grand *Constitution-maker* to the Republic, one and indivisible.

The title of *King-maker* sounded big in the ears of our ancestors ; it was given to one of our ancient Barons, I think it was the Earl of Warwick, in the contests of the White and Red Roses. What would they have thought of a man who every now and then favoured the world with an entire new constitution ? The memory is perplexed with the constitutions of different years, which are the watchwords of parties in France : *La Constitution de l'an 1789—la Constitution de l'an 1793.* I forget from what particular year the present Constitution takes its denomination.

power



power which has fallen to their share in the distribution of the goods of society ; they do not like the slow gradual returns of regular industry ; violence and rapine they look upon as a short cut to the enjoyments which they long after ; they therefore wish to overturn the state, regarding a scene of general confusion and plunder as a proper field for the exertion of their talents ; they are men who desire to reap without the trouble of sowing, and consider the acquisitions of the sober and plodding part of the species as a booty intended to reward their superior genius and audacity. With these men it would be absurd to reason. The broadest conclusion you can draw from your arguments is only a fresh incentive to them to persevere in their schemes. Theorems and corollaries they will grant you all, and be of the same mind still ; to enter into a controversy with them is just as idle as if you were to go and seriously harangue a band of robbers to desist from their enterprises, as they must terminate in the distress of the innocent traveller. Such persons must exist in every society, and that society is the happiest, which, by the education it promotes and the encouragement it holds out to sober industry, admits them in the smallest number. From various causes they abounded more in France than in any other country ; there they are triumphant, though whole sets have perished successively, the victims of each other's ambition ; in the same manner as among the nations that overturned the Roman empire, the tribe that went before was constantly thrust out by the more barbarous tribe



tribe that remained behind; and the moment one race of conquerors began to settle into civilization and assume the form of a regular community, another band of savages appeared from their native North, who, in the full vigour of their unmitigated hardihood, seized what in their turn they yielded to invaders more ferocious than themselves.

Whilst none enter this confederacy against the civil order of mankind but persons of suitable characters and talents, we cannot more reasonably complain than we can of earthquakes and whirlwinds; but it is certainly trying to our patience to see dunces aspire to the sublime and commanding crimes of Borgias and Catilines, and the meanest and most ignorant of the community leave the care of their bullocks and the superintendency of their counters, to engage in plots and conspiracies. True, Catiline conspired to overturn the Roman state, and ventured to attack when a Cicero defended; but who was Catiline? Tully exhausts the subtleties of his style to describe the various qualifications which composed that extraordinary man. I shall not mention that he was of a patrician family, one of the first in Rome; that he possessed a splendid patrimony, till he had dissipated it by his prodigality. Perishable distinctions! to make use of the words of a great orator, compared with the immortality of his genius and his crimes. He was gay with the gay, severe with the severe, and could accommodate his manners and conversation to the various descriptions of mankind.

Senates

Senates listened while he spoke; legions recoiled from the vigour of his arm; his wit and hilarity were the delight of every social circle; he was the hero of the battle and the orator of the forum; he had a mind capable of every design, and a body capable of every hardship; neither watching, nor fatigue, nor hunger, nor the inclemencies of seasons, could break the vigour of his constitution; he could carry on at the same time a private intrigue and a public conspiracy; and while he meditated the destruction of the state that repressed his ambition, he was intent upon the ruin of the woman that inflamed his desires. As far as the word *right* is applicable to wickedness, such a man had a right to be ambitious. Enterprises of gigantic atrocity and daring, from which common natures shrink appalled, were suited to a mind like his. He was one of those destructive spirits whom Providence sometimes sends abroad to try human virtue and confound human wisdom. He meditated the destruction of the Roman commonwealth; but he had a Cicero to contend with, and he failed. Cæsar afterwards succeeded. The name of Cæsar comprehends whatever human valour has of heroic, human sagacity of penetrating, and human wit of elegant and refined. Such names communicate a splendour to the history of those times. We admire whilst we execrate: we are shocked at the atrocity of the purpose, but we are struck by the boldness of the conception, and the talents that appear in the execution. Far different are the crimes of the present day; they answer one great moral



end—wickedness appears in all its native deformity. It is an observation of Johnson upon the character of Lothario, that such representations tend to corrupt the heart: we forget the vice in the accomplishments which accompany it: the eye of the mind is dazzled; it does not discern the libertine, the destroyer of virtue and domestic happiness, where the gentleman, the wit, and the hero, are so conspicuous. The same objection has been made to Lovelace in *Clarissa*, and may be extended to other popular novels.

In this point of view, some good may arise to mankind from the calamitous events which are passing before our eyes. Curious speculators may search the history of our times to discover the true form of vice divested of that false glare which great talents and elegant accomplishments are so apt to throw over it. They will there see political adventurers without courage, conspirators without sagacity: they will there see men without fortune, without extent of views or firmness of resolution, aspiring to govern their country, and the meanest of the human race associated against the most beautiful institutions.

It pains me to think what ignoble enemies the son of Chatham has to encounter!—what a set of conspirators have undertaken to destroy the accumulated wisdom of ages—that scheme of social liberty for which a Somers thought and a William battled.

It



It was originally the observation of Cowley, which he misapplied to Cromwell, and which Burke borrowed in speaking of Hastings, "that when it pleased  
 " Providence to afflict the people of Egypt, it did  
 " not send forth the lion or the tiger, or any of the  
 " wild beasts of the desert, but it sent lice and mice  
 " —it sent the meanest reptiles."

I have done with the politicians who propose to us slavery to the worst of tyrants as the price of our redemption: I turn to men who offer us milder remedies. I shall take one view of these remedies, as the same observations are applicable to them all. We have often heard of what is called (though very improperly) Catholic Emancipation and Parliamentary Reform, as what is to cure every evil, and produce general happiness.

By Catholic Emancipation is meant the admission of Roman Catholics into the Legislature; that is, giving them political power. By Parliamentary Reform I do not know exactly what is meant, as reformers have differed in their schemes upon this subject. I will take it to mean the destruction of boroughs, a point in which all these gentlemen are agreed. What is the state of the country? From a variety of causes operating for a century past, the body of property is centred in a few hands. The bulk of the nation is excluded from power and from influence over power, not merely by legislative provision, but by the circumstances of the society,

joined to that great maxim of the British Constitution, and indeed of all well-regulated government, that where property is, there shall be the great weight in public affairs. Suppose Roman Catholics were to-morrow emancipated, or, to make use of a more proper phrase, admitted to a share of political power, what would be their influence in the Legislature? How few would take their seats in either of the assemblies which compose it! Would they be able to correct the prevailing spirit of the government? Would, through their medium, the opinions and feelings of the people find a way into the proceedings of the Legislature? A century would elapse before such a measure would be known in any public effect. It would appear only to the readers of newspapers, and the persons present when the members took their oaths.

The same may be said to those ingenious gentlemen who propose to reform our House of Commons. It is not the House of Commons alone that wants to be reformed, but the whole country. The point to be accomplished is, to destroy the sullen line of separation that divides the governors from the governed, to blend the different classes of the community into one mass, to incorporate the feelings and opinions of the nation with the acts of the government, to make the House of Commons truly and substantially what they now are in name—the representatives of the people. This can be done only by disseminating wealth over the face of the country ;  
without

without that, Parliamentary Reform is only a dull farce, and would be attended with more evil than good. Let the projectors of reform raise up in the great body of the nation an independent gentry, an opulent commercial interest, a large ruling property that shall secure to the nation due influence in all elections; and then we may speak to them. Their scheme is plausible, and deserves our most serious attention, if we only suppose half a dozen miracles to be wrought. I acknowledge the case warrants supernatural interposition; according to the rule of the poet, it is certainly *dignus vindice nodus*; but it is easier to introduce a divinity into an epic poem, or let down a machine in an opera, than to change at once the established order of things. I appeal to those who know the state of elections in Ireland, whether any good would arise to the great body of the nation from embracing the plan of the most sensible reformers, by destroying the boroughs, and giving all the returns to the counties and great commercial cities? Does the great body of the nation preponderate either in the counties or the great commercial cities? Would the ruling party lose any part of their ascendant? Is not almost all the property of the country theirs? and would not almost all the returns be theirs also? We should still be governed by party feelings and party prejudices; and we should only have the dangers, without the benefit of a change. If this is in a great measure the cause of the wretchedness of Ireland,—if the government of party feelings and party prejudices is at all times a



fore government, it is particularly so at this time. Recent and ever to be deplored events in this country have given to party feelings and party prejudices an extraordinary degree of acrimony.

It does not belong to my subject to expatiate on the causes of the late rebellion: it is sufficient to observe, that it was produced by the men whose principles and views I have at some length commented upon. The interposition of a foreign power was to give it success. This would be sufficient to arm all sober, reflecting well-wishers to their country against it. They know full well—all history attests it—that when a power interposes to assist any nation in a domestic quarrel, the nation prevailing by its assistance must in fact remain subject to it. When we consider the character of the foreign power that would probably possess a ruling and controlling influence over us, if we should not be its slaves, there is no state of bondage that ever the world beheld before these times, or that prevails in any other part of the world at present, which we must not prefer to victory by its co-operation. The rebellion, independently of this foreign connexion, was of the most immoral kind. At the head of it were a parcel of young men, who mistook the talent of writing a futile pamphlet, or making a florid harangue, for the talent of governing a state; and thought that nothing more was wanting to regulate the affairs of a great society but the foolish ambition of attempting it. Their bungling plots terminated in nothing but the miserable death of some of their deluded followers. Their  
design,

design, as far as they had any design, was of the most flagitious nature ; it was not a crime alone against the laws of a particular state, but against the laws of morality and the general interests of mankind ; it aimed at the utter subversion of property ; an ignorant and rapacious populace were to be bribed by the spoils of the rich, and robbery was to supply the means of warfare to rebellion. After what I have said, nobody, I believe, will suspect me to be partial to the cause of our late insurgents. Interest is here at no variance with principle, and both confirmed by my habits of thought and conduct, must make me regard them with execration. I hope, therefore, what follows will not be attributed to any design of spreading disaffection, but merely to a wish of thoroughly investigating a question of the utmost importance in the present crisis.

The fury of the rapacious insurgents was principally levelled against the ruling party ; it was natural it should be so. I do not think religion had the greatest share in determining the hostility ; it might have some upon ignorant bigotted minds. I hope to show, before I conclude, that whatever faults may be charged on the prevailing religion of our people, it is not akin to infidelity, and rather disposes to obedience than encourages resistance to established authority. The ruling party, as such, were of course the objects of every discontent which was directed against the Government. Theirs was the property, theirs, therefore, the booty to allure plunderers ; but, however, it happened, the party that prevails in  
both



both Houses of the Legislature were the principal sufferers by the rebellion; they must regard the great body of the people as criminals towards them. Is it an unfair consequence, that they will carry resentments, the feelings of injured men, into the government of the country? I do not blame those resentments—I do not blame those feelings. Men who have suffered in their persons or property may be allowed to feel as men—such is human nature; but can we expect from them a sober, unprejudiced, dispassionate administration, such as may heal the wounds of our bleeding country; such as may reconcile the animosities of a divided people? Did not many signs appear in the last session of Parliament, that the voice of resentment was more listened to than that of justice? There were found persons to justify acts of subaltern authority, which appeared monstrous to every dispassionate observer; against which, law, policy, every warm feeling of the heart, and every sober judgment of the head, rose up with one unanimous consent.

I have listened to the conversation of men whose humanity could not be doubted in the ordinary intercourse of life, but who were heated by resentment. I, who have lived for some years past in a country of liberty and justice, where neither the voice of rebellion nor persecution ever wounded my ear, who fortunately was not present at the scenes which had raised their feelings to such a pitch, and who, therefore, could not enter into their warmth, was really shocked and astonished. Gibbets and executions



executions seemed to haunt their imaginations ; they looked forward with a savage joy to the sufferings which they would inflict on the rebels when they were taken ; their whole legislative wisdom was punishment, and every punishment was death.

The just animosity against the wretched insurgents has been extended to a prejudice against their religion ; and the most precise, severe, dogmatical mode of Christianity which the impious fanatics in France have persecuted with unrelenting rage, as the most determined enemy to their usurpations, whose head they violently despoiled of all his dominions, and carried into captivity, which ended in his wretched death, which has ever been the support of the throne and the altar, and was once the sole ruling religion of Europe, is considered as the natural ally of infidelity and rebellion.

A set of men, whose opinion is the only thing that can be called a public opinion in Ireland, have arrayed themselves in clubs and lodges to maintain this prejudice, to preserve all religious and civil animosities pure and unmitigated in the country ; and the name of the tolerant and heroic William is made the rallying point of fanaticism and persecution.

I shall take notice of both these subjects before I come to an end of these Observations ; they are intimately connected with the main question proposed to be discussed, or, if not, their extreme importance

will plead my apology. I shall consider whether there is any thing in the genius or character of the Catholic religion which is particularly calculated to render it subservient to the views of the French rulers and their followers ; I shall next examine whether the Orange Affociations (as they are called) are at all congenial to the spirit of the British constitution, or qualified to promote what must be an object dear to every honest heart—genuine obedience and loyalty. But it seems, before I write upon the subject of loyalty, I must vindicate my own. I have already observed that it is customary to raise a shout upon this head, and drown the sober accents of reason in one senseless clamour of fanaticism. It may seem unnecessary to those who have known me for some years past, to enter into any vindication of my character in this respect : but as unfortunately I live in a country where some men judge it necessary, in order to show their attachment to a humane Sovereign, to persecute his subjects, and their love for a mild and beneficent government, to imitate the excesses of its enemies—I think it incumbent upon me to say a few words upon the subject.

At the origin of the French revolution, I acknowledge, with shame and confusion, that I was rash, ought I to say impudent enough, to oppose my shallow judgment to the opinions of that great man, who took such a large and comprehensive view of human affairs ; whose whole life was dedicated to the support of genuine liberty, which he best knew  
how

how to distinguish from despotism assuming that name; who fought in her sacred cause against the oppressors of their species, whether invested with vice-regal government in India, or possessing supreme power in Europe; who pointed out with prophetic wisdom the crimes which now desolate the civilized world in their seeds and first causes; whose eloquent indignation will for ever vindicate the majesty of justice against the chance of arms, and condemn the authors of the French revolution to the everlasting horror of mankind, notwithstanding the dazzling successes of its fanatic armies. The only atonement I can make for my presumption is to confess it, and to offer this slender tribute at the shrine which wisdom and virtue are preparing for their votary in the temple of Immortality. Some ignorant fanatics have raised a clamour about consistency, which would oppose a false shame to the progress of the human mind, and bind a man down to his first opinions, notwithstanding the increasing wisdom of years, and the new facts that may arise on the theatre of the world. All propositions in politics, as well as in every other science, are abridged expressions of facts; and a person might as well begin a course of chymical experiments, resolving to be of the same opinion at the end he was at the beginning, as take a pride in preserving an uniformity of sentiment through a long succession of interesting events in the political world. A variety of causes have crowded more political instruction within these last ten years, than is per-



haps scattered over the rest of history ; and I cannot think highly of that mind which has remained stationary during the progress of the French revolution. But I cannot make use of the apology, which I readily allow is fair and candid in others whom I have heard avail themselves of it, that their detestation of the French government and principles, in the year 1799, is perfectly consistent with their admiration of them ten years ago, since the thing is entirely changed ; and that they alone are inconsistent, who, admiring what is called a monarchy then, admire what is called a republic now ; and applaud with the same enthusiasm the successes of the French armies at present, and the ambitious military spirit which their government has displayed, as they at that period commended the pacific spirit the first Assembly was supposed to manifest in their entire renunciation of conquests \*. I make no such apology

\* In order to comprehend the nature of this uncalled for declaration, we must attend a little to the history of the French revolution: The party which prevailed in the first Assembly was chiefly composed of metaphysicians, or, as they called themselves, philosophers, who came to the government of men and the conduct of great affairs, wild with all the crude speculations which they had learnt in their closets. They considered human society as a *tabula rasa*, on which they might scribble all their fantastic notions and ridiculous theories. Presumption is ever the characteristic of this set of men. The municipal law of France, composed partly of the old Roman civil law, and partly of the provincial customs of the kingdom, methodized and applied to particular cases by a succession of learned men, was one of the first objects on which they exercised their spirit of philosophic legislation. They did not find it to agree with any of their theories. Accordingly, by one sweeping decree, they abolished this system of artificial equity which had grown up under the guide of experience by the accumulated wisdom of ages. Thus they left individuals without any regulation in their private concerns,

apology—I frankly confess my error. I admired, in the year 1789, what I now think was at that time so far from admirable, that it was detestable. I entertain sentiments in the highest degree hostile to the sect which predominated in the first Assembly of France. I think they planted the seeds of all the subsequent disorders. That specious philosophy, which, appealing to first principles, and superseding all positive institution, then seduced me by the soothing cant of humanity \* which it spoke, appears

concerns, society without any of the ties or holdings which keep it together: then arose the men of violence and blood, who by a just dispensation of Providence sent whole sets of these prating philosophers to the guillotine. Bold and barefaced robbery and murder entered by the breach which shallow speculation had made. Once the community was set loose from every restraint of law and religion; men who were not amused by empty declamations, but went straight forward to their purpose, of course prevailed. It is the order of things in this confused and distracted state of society: Thucydides remarked it in ancient Greece; modern France affords another terrible example of it: a Condorcet, a Brissot, a Vergniaud, go before—a Danton, a Robespierre, follow.

\* It is remarkable that this cant of humanity has generally preceded the most savage cruelties. Nero lamented in the beginning of his reign, that he was able to write, as he was thereby compelled to sign the death-warrants of criminals. Robespierre, soon after he entered upon the public stage, proposed the abolition of the punishment of death. A work which that ex-tyrant Barrere published about two years ago, is extremely humorous in this respect; that atrocious wretch, whose crimes have no parallel † in history, who is judged too bad for the Council of Elders or Youngsters (I forget which), speaks of the pure heart-felt satisfaction which he reserves for his declining years, when his heirs shall have grown gray under persecution, to read the vindication of his calumniated innocence in the circle of his weeping family. One would think we were perusing the language of virtuous discontent, coming from some venerable Cato retiring from the ingratitude of mankind.

The

† See, for the odious mixture of libertinism and cruelty which marked the government of this man, a short pamphlet by one Villat, an ex-juror of the Revolutionary Tribunal of Paris, published soon after the fall of Robespierre.



pears to me the prime cause of all the massacres at which humanity shudders; and can find no palliative, but in the apologies of men who would excuse the cruelties of Nero, if he had bethought himself to call his government a republic, and his administration liberty.

These are the sentiments which I have not called up to serve the purpose of the present day, but which I have proclaimed as my firm and ardent conviction for these three years past, to the knowledge of all my acquaintances. If to be loyal a man must be merciless; if nothing but ferocity and cruelty can display his zeal for the best of constitutions, I am willing to forfeit my pretensions to the character of a loyal subject; my only consolation is, that I fare no worse than Lord Somers would have done, had he lived in the present day; he certainly would have been a little surprised to hear the example of savage, republican \* France, proposed for the imitation of a Parliament supposed to be animated by a British spirit. I think he would have judged that

The works of Rousseau have been very pernicious in this respect; they have taught the scoundrels of the present day to blend the jargon of sentiment with the perpetration of the greatest crimes.

\* I call it republican in conformity with popular language, but I will never allow that that strange medley of despotism and licentiousness bears any more resemblance to a republic, than our consul at Algiers to the consuls of ancient Rome;—by the bye, the Algerines call their government a republic too. A work is wanting from the pen of some genuine and enlightened friend of that ancient and respectable form of government, to vindicate it from the insult offered to it by the usurpers in France, giving its name to their flagitious denomination,



it did not become the government of his country to contend with the most flagitious of tyrants on their own element of blood and oppression, that justice and humanity ought to be inscribed on the banners of the allies, as murder and cruelty stalk in the van of their enemy. There would be something plausible in the opposite idea, if we suppose that we could be successful in this competition of unjust violence ; but who is there but must despair, when he thinks of the rivals he has to encounter ?

A comfortable thickness of skull, and an adamantine hardness of heart, might do much ; and perhaps we might produce some gentlemen who would struggle hard for victory, and save their honour even in defeat ; but I am afraid our cold climate and northern soil can produce nothing so ripe and finished as injustice and vice raised in the hot-bed of libertinism and metaphysics. Refiners in wickedness must ever have a great superiority over dulness blundering into wrong ; mere natural untutored depravity can never reach the sublime flights of speculative systematic profligacy. I think, therefore, that we had better not enter into the contest ;—plain, straight-forward probity is more suited to the natural turn of our genius. If as much pains were taken to re-establish concord, as are taken to maintain dissension, our politicians would be surprised how far they advanced by following the easy road of common sense.

I have

I have said enough, and perhaps my reader may judge I have said too much, on the subject of my loyalty. The prevailing language of these unfortunate times will excuse this egotism ;—I know no other excuse.

I cannot resist the temptation of here proclaiming my long and intimate friendship with a man who has rendered the most essential service to morality and civil order, by bringing genuine metaphysics to the aid of law and establishment, and destroying all the sophistry by which they were assailed. I am not likely to have learnt the maxims of rebellion in the familiar intercourse which subsisted between us, in which we conversed on most political subjects, and seldom found our opinions disagree. Mr. Mackintosh will receive with his usual indulgence this tribute of genuine esteem and affection from a friend who would have rendered this little work much more perfect if he had had the benefit of his remarks.

I have left my task unfinished—I have criticized with freedom the systems proposed by others to remedy the evils of our condition, and I have not pointed out the advantages of the measure which I defend. I am no optimist in politics any more than philosophy. I do not assert this to be the best of all possible worlds, and I am far from announcing the scheme proposed as the best of all possible schemes.

If I found my countrymen united in such a manner that I could call them one people ; if the higher and lower classes were not divided by every sentiment which exercises a dominion over the human mind ; if to every cause of separation arising from the concerns of this earth, were not added the prospects of futurity, as if their animosity fought to maintain itself in the regions beyond the grave ; if I did not see contempt and aversion above—a rooted malevolence below, occasionally breaking out through all the restraints which provoked and irritated authority would heap upon it—if I could look for any remedy to the misfortunes of our condition in this gloomy and melancholy prospect, I should not look abroad for relief.

As a general proposition I subscribe to its truth, that it is better for a nation to govern itself than to be governed by foreigners. Do not the particular circumstances of Ireland form an exception ?

True, there will not be that close and endearing connexion which subsists between the people of England and their representatives : the most sanguine friend to the Union cannot promise that ; but at least we shall be delivered from the empire of prejudice and resentment. The Parliament of Great Britain speaks the opinion of the British public. Our grievances will be fairly canvassed and examined on a large theatre, and a free and enlightened people will be our judges. I am not sure that some



spirit of national animosity and rivalry will not corrupt the integrity of their judgments ; but I appeal to every reflecting Irishman whether we shall meet with as many prejudices as we have at present to encounter. If the choice were between an English and a fair Irish public, I should not hesitate ; but that is not the alternative proposed to the people of Ireland, but between a neighbouring enlightened nation, and a set of men, born indeed in the same country, but having no connexion of habit, religion, scarcely of language with them, hating, despising them, deriving from the circumstance of being born within the same geographical arrangement with them, only every local prejudice and every local animosity. If there is any thing which may fairly be called a public opinion influencing and controlling the Parliament of this kingdom, I give up the whole argument. I speak not of the opinion of a few corporations or grand juries, which comes loaded with all the poison of party rancour, but a public opinion speaking the sentiments and feelings of the bulk of the people, if, poor wretches ! they have any sentiments or feelings left.

This is the ground on which I stand, in defending the measure of an Union ; and I trust I do not depart from the sentiments of a good Irishman in so doing. It has been one of the arts of the opponents of this salutary plan to assume the whole merit of patriotism to themselves, and stigmatize every one who would throw off the iron yoke of party government,

vernment, either as a partisan of rebellion, or a fervile supporter of the Minister. I do not wonder that those who, for a series of years, have enjoyed all the benefits of this government, should wish to retain it, and endeavour to raise a popular cry in its favour; but that they who have long crouched beneath their government, who have received nothing but oppression and insult at the hands of the ruling faction, who were yesterday smarting under their lash, with their stripes still fresh upon their backs \*, should raise an uproar in defence of the despotism from which the kindness of Providence would deliver them, and turn against their benefactors and favours:—such credulity and folly may truly seem surprising; but I trust the eyes of the people will soon be open, that they will acknowledge with gratitude the mild and beneficent spirit which dictated the scheme of the Union. Future generations of Irishmen will bless the memory of the Minister who proposed it.

There has been a great deal of zeal displayed about Catholic Emancipation. I have already observed that the term is improper; it means the admission of the Catholics to political power: little benefit would descend to the great body of the community—no, not for a century to come. An Union will really emancipate the Irish people; it will emancipate them from party government; it will eman-

\* This is more than metaphor.

cipate them from the tyranny of passion, from the despotism of prejudice. Some judgment may be formed of the complexion of a measure from those who support it, and those who oppose it. It would be strange if those to whose interposition we owe, in some degree, our safety, whose mild and paternal government has restored some happiness to this country, should on a sudden have conceived the project of our destruction; and they whose fury was lately ready to fall upon our heads, who cannot conceal their malevolence, even when they would assume the appearance of friendship, and betray their old love of dissension even in their invitations to concord—if they should be the most zealous for our welfare. Who are they who deafen the public ear with their cries against an Union? who, for the first time in their lives, remember that they are Irishmen, when they would work up our Irish passions and Irish prejudices to serve their purposes? Are not the principal of them men, who but yesterday were loud and vehement in pushing on every measure of violence and persecution; who would soon have reigned over the wasted fields and smoking cottages of depopulated Ireland, had it not been for the seasonable arrival of our venerable Chief Governor?

I will not commemorate the mild virtues of that noble person; he is too high for panegyric; but if these accents of love and respect from the most humble, but not the least fervent of his admirers, should



should gain an audience from his illustrious ear, I would tell him, that whatever have been the achievements of a life dedicated to the service of his King and country, Ireland has been the scene of his proudest triumphs. The olive of peace which he has planted in this country will afford a nobler shade to shelter his venerable age, and flourish to succeeding ages a more glorious monument to his posterity, than all the laurels which he gathered in the fields of India. The monster of religious fanaticism, which indicates its approaching fate by the last convulsive struggles it exerts, was a more formidable enemy than the tyrant which he overcame in those distant regions; and if the shouts of armies shall proclaim the victorious Chieftain, the voice of a grateful people shall hail the mild and tolerant Viceroy.

I turn with reluctance from so interesting a subject, to answer the cavils of peevish and splenetic objectors. There are men who will acknowledge the evils of our condition, nay, if possible, will exaggerate them; but they will contend that it is England which has purposely heaped these misfortunes upon our heads, in order to compel us to an Union, as the only remedy to which we can resort; and therefore, out of spite and vexation, we ought to be averse from a measure which England seems so ardently to have desired. It is singular in this objection, that if it rested upon a fact, as it does  
not,

not, it would prove nothing ; but it is as false in its premises as it is impotent in its conclusion.

England, it is true, has been obliged to tolerate, but has never promoted the oppression under which this country has laboured ; on the contrary, it has uniformly interposed to soften and mitigate it.

We shall be at no loss to discover from whom this oppression proceeded, when we consider that the majority of this nation has for centuries past been governed by men who differed from them in religion—who at once feared and despised them.

Perhaps this complete separation of the governors and the governed, originated from the English conquest ; but being once established, all the consequences naturally flowed. It is of no importance to go back to the reign of King John, for the purpose of venting our spleen against England. It is worse than idle to be putting possible cases, entirely wide of the real state of facts, and to say, if we never had any connexion with England, we should not stand in our present singular predicament ; the government would have arisen from the bosom of the people, and there would be the natural connexion between the rulers and the ruled. I shall not stay to examine how far the consequences of this supposition are well or ill deduced ; all I maintain is, that since the government of the country has been erected on its present basis, the passions of

our own countrymen have alone produced the oppression we have endured ; and that the influence of England has been rather exerted in counteracting than aggravating their pressure.

I am the more convinced, that the circumstance which foreigners must observe, and all good Irishmen lament, of Ireland's being behindhand with every nation of Europe in the condition of her people, is owing to the peculiar feature in her government, of being entirely distinct and separate from the nation, by remarking, that this was her unfortunate condition even before the difference of religion existed.

Previous to the Reformation, and before the distinction of sects could possibly have arisen, the evils of a party-government were felt, in the authority which the English settlers exercised over the aboriginal inhabitants. This may lend some plausibility to the spleen and vehemence of those politicians who represent the English nation as the cause of all our misfortunes. But I have nothing more to do with antique grievances, than I have to do with imaginary cases. The acrimony of religious dissension has been superadded to the animosity of different originals, or rather, the latter distinction has been entirely lost in the former. Our governors are our own countrymen, and very few consider whether their ancestors came over from England, or were a part of the ancient inhabitants of the country. But the evil  
is,



is, that though the governors are for the most part born in the same country with the governed, this does not give rise to any tie of connexion between them; on the contrary, it only inflames the spirit of party, which has produced the misery of the latter.

I have already observed, that England is obliged to tolerate this party-government. It is a truth of which we ought not to lose sight, that an Irish Parliament, entirely independent, cannot exist, consistently with the present condition of the empire. It is essential to the nature of our connexion with the sister kingdom, that the English Cabinet should possess a directing and controlling influence in every question of imperial importance. Without this influence, the connexion between the two countries would be soon dissolved—Ireland would break loose from England. They who have the word Independence so often in their mouths, have been too long behind the curtain not to know, that Irish independence is a mere phantom. They are not such novices in the world as they pretend to be; they mimic the lisp of simplicity but awkwardly. They are not the dupes of the fine words with which they would cajole us. As the Athenian woman discovered Theophrastus not to be an Athenian, by the affectation with which he atticised, we know these gentlemen to be but recruits in the popular band, by their perpetual vociferation of popular words—An Union!—or, No Union! Great Britain must, in fact, legislate for Ireland; she must legislate, either directly, by the union of the Parliaments, or indi-  
rectly

rectly through the medium of our Parliament. It becomes the duty of a Minister of Great Britain, as such, to secure that influence over the votes of the two Houses, as will perpetuate the connexion between the countries. The individual therefore, who happens to be Minister, cannot be considered as criminal to the Irish people, whatever measures he pursues or tolerates for this purpose. However his personal feelings may revolt, he is bound by a necessity inherent in his office.

I know I shall depart from the established jargon of political speculation, when I conceive a politician may be actuated in any measure by a virtuous motive. Our pamphleteers, if they are not so profound as Tacitus, are every jot as malicious. They refine upon human iniquity by system, and represent every public man under the worst colours by rule. I shall run a risk of being thought a dupe, or, what is worse, a mean dissembler, affecting the language of simplicity, when I suppose the Minister may have been led to the project of the Union by some regard to the welfare of this country. But whatever may have been his motives, it is more important for us to inquire, whether we are not, in point of fact, in a state of dependance at present, and dependance upon the worst terms. I suppose I need not go about to prove, that the will of the British Minister is the law of our Parliament, in every question in which he conceives it worth his while to make known his will. This is a proposition, which, like the first principles



ciples of philosophy, cannot gain, but must lose in its evidence by every injudicious attempt at demonstration.

But it may be proper for us to consider, how this uniform submission is obtained, how national rivalry and animosity is lulled asleep ; and legislators independent in theory, are rendered dependant in practice. This is a question which I am neither qualified nor desirous fully to evolve. My habits of life have not put me in a situation to know much of the nauseous detail of corruption ; and if my knowledge extended further, it would ill become an independent pen to gratify a malicious curiosity by the display. But there is a branch of this question which falls immediately within the scope of these observations. We cannot thoroughly understand the nature of the party-government which prevails in Ireland, unless we bestow some attention upon it.

I say then, that one of the means by which the British Minister obtains the support of a large majority in our two Houses of Parliament, is by tolerating that empire of prejudice and passion, to which I conceive all the evils of our condition are to be attributed. This kind of bargain or contract subsists between the Minister and the members of the ministerial majority: Support me in questions which I deem essential to my interest, and to the connexion between the two kingdoms which I am bound to maintain, and in every question of mere domestic regulation give a full loose to all your passions and prejudices ; nay, when you



go down to your counties, exercise uncontrolled dominion over all your neighbours ; discharge your animosity upon every object of your displeasure ;—your support of me indemnifies you for every offence you may commit, either from party or personal feeling, against the person or property of the subject.

It is with extreme reluctance I throw off the veil from our unfortunate condition. Persons, who, like the writer of these remarks, would wish to respect every thing that is established, and are afraid to encroach upon the limits of obedience and loyalty, while they discuss the evils of a mal-administration, labour under considerable difficulties in the investigation of this question. Few of the opponents of the Union impose any of these restraints upon themselves ; they permit themselves unbounded petulance, in railing at every thing that comes in the way of their arguments. But this example does not give any sanction to licentiousness on the other side.

I am not certain I have been as correct as I wish to be ; but if I give offence, I wish my readers to believe it is not intentional : I wish to keep clear of the difficulties of my situation, but I may be deficient in skill and dexterity.

One of the parties in this bargain, the Minister, I think, may be fairly excused by the necessity of his office. Theorists may launch their readers on the wide ocean of metaphysics, and talk a great deal of

virtue and vice in the abstract ; but whoever studies morals, not as a source of idle disquisitions, but as a practical science, will form his judgment of the conduct of men, with a perpetual reference to circumstances and situations. The Minister of England is a subject of the British empire, and may be expected to pay some regard to all the nations, and all the various portions of territory subject to our common sovereign ; but he may be supposed to feel a regard of preference for the country that is immediately the object of his care. I have already observed, that it is his primary duty to maintain the connexion between Great Britain and Ireland ; and the unfortunate circumstances of our present condition make it necessary for him to employ for this purpose means inconsistent with our welfare.

It is not so easy, perhaps, to excuse the conduct of our own members ; but satire and invective are not the design of these Observations. I think it will be for the advantage of the people of this country to be delivered from a government in which human frailty has not been found proof against the force of temptation ; and their happiness may pay for every deviation from morality on the part of their rulers.

I have the authority of some of the most illustrious friends of Irish liberty, that this statement is just. Their names would add splendour to these pages, but would convict me of presumption if I ventured to mention them on this occasion ; they have assured me,  
that,

that, to their certain knowledge, the Irish part of the Cabinet were constantly pressing on violent and sanguinary measures, and English influence had need to exert all its power to restrain their fury within any reasonable bounds.

But granting that the reverse were the truth, that England was chargeable with all the sufferings we have endured, that to the rancour of English hostility was owing the peculiar spirit of bitterness which marks our religious and civil animosities, and that those benevolent statesmen, who, since they have been threatened with a loss of the domination they have long exercised, have turned patriots upon our hands, had been constantly employed in softening our grievances, and pouring balm into our wounds; the question is not, against whom we shall vent our spleen, but what is the best practicable mode of bettering ourselves. States are not like individuals in this respect—we pardon some warmth of resentment, some glow of passion in the character of a man in society; nay, we require it in that nice mixture of balanced qualities which composes an amiable and accomplished person. There are failings arising from the effervescence of blood, which, particularly in youth, are seemly and decorous—the character wants life and animation, without them; the colours lie flat upon the canvass. What man of genius who does not prefer the spirited incorrectness of an Italian master to the dull regularity of a Dutch painter? This is an observation of Hume, and he instances that amiable and heroic prince,  
Henry



Henry IV. of France. We like him the better for what a bigot or pedant might think failings in his life ; we should not take such a lively interest in his various fortunes, if the attractions of the beautiful Gabrielle had not softened his lion heart. It is a delightful image to the fancy to represent to ourselves a youthful hero covered with blood and dust, throwing himself at the feet of an accomplished mistress. We should, no doubt, have been prodigiously edified, and probably thrown into a comfortable doze, if Henry IV. had written a long pious homily to the woman whose beauty he adored, exhorting her to chastity, and a number of other excellent virtues ; but we feel a pleasing warmth stealing about our hearts, and regret the age of beautiful illusions, when we read the letter of that gallant and warlike prince to his mistress on the eve of a battle which was to decide the fate of his kingdom :—" If I fall, my last thought shall be of God, " and my last but one of you."

Voltaire, who of all men best knew how to mix up the ingredients of human flattery into the most agreeable doses, never loses sight of this truth, arising from a nice knowledge of the human heart ; he does not alone celebrate the qualities which we approve of, but those which we blame and love.

Richardson, on the contrary, by not attending to this principle, constantly fails, whatever pains he takes to exhibit perfect characters ; he sometimes gains the  
verdict

verdict of our judgment ; he never succeeds in warming our hearts.

These reflections may displease some readers as but little connected with the subject ; but the lovers of literature will pardon me, if I sometimes relieve the dryness of a political discussion, by turning to topics of greater elegance and amenity.

I have considered what the heart recognises as seemly and lovely in a human character ; but none of these sallies of passion are pardonable in the conduct of a state. A state is a moral artificial person ; it is a contrivance of reason for purposes which fall alone under the cognizance of reason ; it ought to be like the Goddess, which, in the imaginations of poets, represented justice, without feeling and without passion. That cold phlegmatic attention to interest which we but little relish in private life, is the only allowable conduct of a nation ; we ought not, therefore, to consider what feelings we ought to entertain towards England, but soberly and dispassionately examine whether any way is open to us for improving our condition but by a Union of the Parliaments ; and it is of importance not to forget, that, after all, the question is not between a state of perfect independence, and subjection to English legislation. We are now governed by influence, as in the event of an Union we shall be governed by regular Acts of Parliament, so that the question resolves itself into this :—Which is it better for us to be governed by, the English Minister, acting



secretly by the means I have described, and by others which the reader will easily conceive, through the medium of our two Houses, or by a fair unprejudiced English public, speaking by the organ of the English Parliament? and we must not go back to other times, and consider what we may conceive to have been the growing prosperity of Ireland before the late rebellion. We must take Ireland as she is at this moment; bleeding under the consequences of a suppressed insurrection, affected as she must be in common with the rest of Europe by the revolution in France; in fine, acted upon by all the events domestic and foreign which have lately passed before our eyes. This is not a question on which we may give a loose to our imaginations; we are bound up in space and time; we are limited by every consideration which must arise on a question of conduct; we are to consider not only what is right, but what is expedient; what is desirable, but what is practicable. We are to look at Ireland with all her circumstances about her. We are not to forget the dissensions and animosities which prevail among her people. The feelings of the governors and the governed, relatively to each other, nay, the characters of public men, ought not to escape us. There is not a topic of political importance which Irishmen ought not soberly and dispassionately to examine, before they come to a decision; then let them decide.

It is often asked, when we shall see the mighty consequences that are promised from an Union.

None



None but a ridiculous visionary will promise, that a Union will operate as a talisman, and suddenly cure all the evils of our condition; but it will deliver us from the pressure of a party-government. And if, as I have endeavoured to show, a party-government is the great cause why Ireland has not profited of all the advantages which nature, with a liberal hand, has poured out upon her, why she has not kept pace with the other countries of Europe in social improvements, with a great natural superiority over most of them, we may reasonably hope, when this cause of our calamities is removed, that we shall rise to our natural level. That wit and hilarity, for which Irishmen are so celebrated, will no longer be employed in animating the excesses of nocturnal debauch, but the vigour of mind from which they proceed being turned into the channel of regular, sober industry, will bring commerce into our ports, and diffuse agriculture over our bogs. Irishmen will no longer wander a race of suspected exiles, depending upon the success of an intrigue for a dishonourable livelihood, but assume a state of true honour and dignity in cultivating the domestic virtues at home. That valour, which now, spending itself in nocturnal brawls and private quarrels, often carries desolation into the bosom of private families, and converts the mansion of gaiety into the house of mourning, will exert itself in repressing and humbling the wicked and implacable enemy of the civilized world. Perhaps these are the illusions of a heated fancy—perhaps the event will disprove these predictions of a patriotic enthusiasm; but this, at least,

least, is the fervent prayer of one who has no interest to promote but the welfare of his country, who can declare, in the sincerity of his heart, that he never formed a wish or harboured a sentiment inconsistent with what he conceived the happiness of his fellow-creatures.

I have done with the subject of the Union, which has already exercised many pens, and which will perhaps receive little additional light from these speculations. But I should not satisfy the motive which originally led me to this undertaking, to contribute my mite to the peace and tranquillity of my country, if I did not offer some reflections on the character and genius of the prevailing religion of the people, and consider the tendency of the associations styling themselves *Orange*.

The Catholic religion has, at different times, been attacked by a number of enemies of various descriptions; but it has never been charged, before these times, with favouring the doctrines of infidelity, or authorizing the pretensions of rebellious subjects. Some persons, whose sentiments were hostile to it, have suspected that it was the natural enemy of civil liberty. But never hitherto has it been thought, that authority had any thing to dread from its character and genius. If we look at its history, we shall find it uniformly on the side of magistracy. So convinced were the authors of the revolution in France of its tendency to counteract their views, that it was a familiar

miliar maxim with them, *Il faut decatholiciser la France*. It will not be the least curious among the singularities of this eventful period, that a religion, which was formerly supposed to maintain the divine and indefeasible right of kings, and which was made the object of legislative persecution on that account, should now be conceived to incline to the new-fangled notions of liberty and the rights of man. He would be an ingenious speculator, that would trace any connexion between the volumes of Sir Robert Filmer and the licentious metaphysics of l'Abbé Sieyes.

It was an observation of, perhaps, the largest and most pregnant mind that ever surveyed the history of man, that those religions which had long been under the protection of authority, were naturally inclined to favour its prerogatives; whereas the principles of popular resistance might perhaps be traced in those systems of worship which had grown up against establishment, and had originally been the objects of a coercive and restraining policy on the part of the magistrate. Apply this principle to the present case. Is that religion, which was once the sole governing religion of Europe, a religion of rebellion? It might moderate the excesses of power, to mark the spirit of retributive justice which seems to run along with the stream of time. We are now defending the Catholic religion, as not the enemy of authority; and there was a time when any act of offence against it was thought to argue the most rebellious disposition in the subject. Cardinal Bentivoglio, who, after the



manner of the ancient historians, puts speeches in the mouths of the actors in his story analogous to their several characters, and, as he conceived, expressive of their sentiments, represents the Duke of Alva as uttering an opinion to this effect: That iron foldier, whose heart was never assailed by fear, as his bowels never melted to compassion, little thought, when he employed fire and sword against the Reformation, that persons of the same tenets as those he so rigidly proscribed, and which alone he deemed compatible with the prerogatives of his sovereign, would in their turn be pursued by irritated authority, as its natural and incorrigible enemies. This example is enough to make the sternest advocate for severity tremble. A God of severe and terrible justice presides over the concerns of this earth: he makes the posterity of the guilty accountable for the sins of their fathers, and often at a distant period raises up the objects of persecution, to be the instruments of retaliation on the heads of those whose merciless government they had formerly endured.

We have only to regard a little the Catholic religion, to be convinced that it is the farthest possible from any connexion with infidelity. It exercises the faith of its votaries more than any other system of worship; it keeps human reason under a severer control, and exacts a more implicit and uniform submission of the understanding to authority. It accordingly was the form of Christianity which the infidels  
of

of France particularly detested: it was that of which they had chiefly felt the pressure, and which they were most anxious to destroy. Indeed, their enmity to Christianity was principally excited by the Catholic religion; and it was through the sides of the latter that they attacked the former. That these were the sentiments of d'Alembert, Diderot, and the other original champions of disbelief, appears from a passage out of the late Lord Orford's correspondence, which was published some time ago in one of our papers; and that their successors, the Condorcets, the Brissots of the present day, did not depart from them, may be gathered from their speeches and writings.

A Catholic priest must therefore be the weakest of all weak beings, who in any degree lends himself to the views of the French rulers. What has been the fate of his brethren in France? They have partly been massacred, and such as have escaped from the daggers that were brandished for their destruction, live upon the bounty of men, aliens indeed from their particular mode of faith, but united with them in the community of the Christian religion.

Let it not be said that Catholics are faithful to princes of their own persuasion, but rebellious to governors whom they regard as heretics.

It might formerly be a point of contention which particular form of Christianity should prevail: sects had leisure to tear each other to pieces about speculative

lative tenets. But these differences should cease now that a more important question has arisen in the European world. The followers of Christ should now be united:—they are united in the attack, and should be united in the defence. It is only in this unfortunate island that the contest is about the Catholic and Protestant modes of faith. Every where else the matter disputed is, whether there shall be any Christianity at all in the world.

We may say that the genius of religious fanaticism has imprinted upon our soil his last lingering footsteps; but we might dispense with his parting visit. He is not like Aftrea: he will not leave behind him a number of happy human beings to regret his departure:—I am afraid blood and destruction are the only marks by which we shall trace that he has been there. This leads me to consider the principles of his votaries. A number of persons have associated together to worship him in a solemn manner, and they have assumed the name of Orange Clubs!

If these Observations should ever reach any readers out of Ireland, they will be very apt to mistake the nature of these Orange Clubs: they may conceive they are associations of persons who meet to celebrate the memory of King William. If this was their object, so far from condemning them, I should be among the most zealous and forward to solicit admission into one of them.

I venerate



I venerate—I adore the memory of King William. If a ray of liberty still continues to cheer the social world of Europe,—if the whole of that precious fire has not been extinguished in the present contest between lawless force and established authority, it is to the unwearied exertions of that illustrious prince we are indebted for it. With valour and patience, which neither adversity could break nor disappointment weary, he persevered to defend the independence of Europe against the enterprises of that weak and vain monarch Louis XIV. A saying of his, when his native country (Holland) was invaded by the most formidable armies then in the world, and despondency began to communicate itself to the stoutest hearts, should, particularly at the present period, be impressed on the breasts of all sovereigns. Happy if his example could rouse them to that fortitude which is necessary to meet the dangers they have to encounter. “I am determined,” said he, “to die in the last dike of my country.” A calm phlegmatic constancy marked the whole of his conduct. He seemed to rise above the sphere of human passions: his courage was without ostentation; vanity never dictated any of his enterprises; deliberate and collected in the cabinet—intrepid in the field. His plans were contrived with wisdom, and executed with boldness. He was often defeated—never disgraced. He had great generals to contend with—fortune deserted him; but her caprices never had power over his reputation. Let it not be forgotten by those who make use of his name to cover their narrow bigotry,  
that

that in age of religious animosities, a benignant, tolerant spirit was a distinguishing feature in his character. What would he have thought, if, in that country where his victorious hand planted not the tree of modern liberty watered with blood, but the protecting shade of the British Constitution, he had seen persons who called themselves Christians, when their common God and Saviour was attacked by a conspiracy of infidel fanatics, abandoning the cause of the general defence, and persecuting each other with all the virulence of bigotry run mad? You who admire King William, study a little the history of his life; do not all that lies in you to disgrace, by your stupid ignorance, the object of your veneration.

I shall not adopt any vague contradicted reports in explaining the nature of the Orange Clubs. Fabulous enormities will, no doubt, be imputed by popular malice to persons affecting a mysterious secrecy. Thus, no doubt, the ancient Templars were calumniated in the reports of the times; and perhaps this principle may have operated in the late accounts which have been published respecting the Free-Masons and illuminated societies of the present day. If the Orange Clubs were no more than associations to assist the executive magistrate in the exercise of his government, I should not be very severe in my strictures upon them.

I cer-

I certainly do not approve of such associations in quiet times. I think that any institution which would carry the little prejudices and passions of private life into the dispensation of public justice, is not on general principles agreeable to the spirit of wise government, and that it is particularly repugnant to the genius of the British Constitution. The British Constitution has at its head an executive magistrate, who is such by hereditary right.

Paine has flung a great deal of low illiberal abuse on hereditary government; but some of the wisest thinkers that ever enlightened the world have been strong in their commendations of it, and chiefly upon this principle—that by the law of hereditary succession, the magistrate is qualified to exercise an elevated, unprejudiced spirit in the administration of the laws. He does not come to his office warm with all the animosities and partialities, which he would probably derive from the intercourse of private life: not having mixed much in the societies of private individuals, he is not likely to have any spleen to gratify, or friendship to indulge, which might bias the erect and impartial justice of government.

But it is evident, that this advantage of an hereditary constitution will be destroyed, if every exciseman with a bit of Orange riband flaunting from his button-hole is to become the executive magistrate of the parish. Individuals will not live under the protection



tection of equal laws administered without passion or prejudice by a magistrate so far raised above them that he cannot possibly be supposed to select any of them as the objects of his animosity or spleen, but will be subjected to the tyranny of all the passions which can infest the breast of a man in private life.

If, however, the associations in question were of this description solely, I should not venture to censure them with any severity. Extraordinary times require extraordinary proceedings. A great man who well understood and fondly cherished liberty, has said—when bad men conspire, good men must associate.

The English constitution cannot be expected to pursue its elevated majestic course without deviation, when all the evil passions of the human breast are let loose against it. Associations of what are called United Irishmen have been formed for the destruction of civil order, and associations of the loyal and well-disposed to counteract them may be allowed.

If civil liberty and good government suffer in this contest, they alone are answerable for the consequences, who, by their wicked attempts to destroy the frame of the state, induce the warmest friends of the ancient rights of the nation to countenance proceedings which they would not otherwise approve of. It is thus that licentiousness produces despotism, and the supporters of what is falsely  
called

called popular liberty, become the most powerful auxiliaries of arbitrary power.

Affociations of this kind have met with the approbation of persons in the sister country, to whose authority I should ever make it a point to submit my private sentiments.

If, therefore, the Orange Clubs went no farther than I have stated, I should scarcely venture to condemn them. Though I should not approve of them as a general institution, I should admit they were warranted by the particular circumstances of the times.

I have already observed that I shall take no vague popular reports in commenting upon these affociations. Oaths have been imputed to them at which humanity shudders, and which it is impossible could ever form a band of connexion between honest men. I shall advert only to two principles which are confessedly essential to the institution, and which appear to me in the highest degree blameable; the first is the rigid exclusion of Roman Catholics; the second, the oath of secrecy by which the members bind themselves.

If the Orange Clubs are affociations of loyalty to maintain the authority of the magistrate, and restrain the seditious, why not admit every person who has given good proofs of his attachment to the go-



vernment of the country, without any reference to religious opinions? To exclude Roman Catholics, as such, is substantially to say, that every person professing that faith is naturally an ally of the French demagogues, and unworthy of trust from the established government. I think I have already shown that nothing can be falser than such a sentiment. I am sure that every thinking man will agree with me that nothing can be more pernicious than to propagate it. What can more effectually assist the views of the French rulers in any design of invasion which they may meditate against this country, than to tell the majority of our people, the tenour of their religious belief would naturally persuade them to forward the objects of their wicked ambition?

As a plan of policy, this contrivance is absurd and ridiculous in the extreme; as an experiment of ingenuity, it would be entitled to some praise. All the whimsical combinations that ever presented themselves to the greatest lovers of the monstrous, that ever agitated the dreams of a person in the burning violence of a fever, never equalled the singular union that these gentlemen would effect—of French principles, and the Roman Catholic faith. Without their assistance, I suppose it would not enter into the diplomatic imagination of l'Abbé Sieyes himself, for the massacrers of the Catholic clergy in France, and the invaders of their property—for the murderers of the Pope, to look for allies among the bigotted peasantry of Ireland.



I shall not enlarge upon this topic;—the folly of the principle blended inseparably with the Orange institution is too glaring not to press upon the understanding of every unprejudiced observer.

I pass to the second rule of these clubs, to bind the members by an oath of secrecy. Political associations with an oath of secrecy covering their proceedings from the public view, as they are new in the annals of the British Constitution, so they are in the highest degree pernicious, and even criminal.—There is no knowing what use the factious may make of such an institution.

The Orange Clubs are loyal to-day, but who will answer for their continuing so? May they not become to-morrow the instruments of private ambition? The oath of secrecy by which they are sheltered from the observation of the government, affords an opportunity of engrafting any principles upon them, of converting them to any purpose. I think this subject deserves the serious consideration of the Legislature; and it is a very important question, whether strong means should not be adopted to suppress such associations.

An act has been passed, if I mistake not, in England, obliging all clubs and societies to give a public account of the objects of their institution.

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An exemption was demanded in favour of the Free-Masons; but though this institution was stated and admitted to be an institution purely benevolent, the wise statesmen who discussed the question, thought all societies in general, sheltered from the inspection of the magistrate by an oath of secrecy, incompatible with regular government.

But I am not under the necessity of making use of legal or constitutional analogies in the present argument. I assert roundly, that by an express act of Parliament all Orange Clubs are illegal meetings, and all persons tendering the Orange oath are guilty of felony, and liable to transportation for life. The act of the 27th of the King, in the part relative to unlawful oaths, runs in these words :

“ Any person or persons *not duly qualified by law to administer oaths*, who shall administer, or cause to be administered, or tender or cause to be tendered to, or by threats, promises, persuasions, or other undue means, cause, induce, or procure to be taken by any person or persons any unlawful oath or solemn engagement upon a book or otherwise, and being by due course of law thereof convicted, shall be adjudged guilty of felony, and may be transported for life ; and every person who shall take any such oath or solemn engagement as aforesaid, not being there-to compelled by inevitable necessity, and being by due course of law thereof convicted, shall be adjudged

judged guilty of felony, and suffer as a felon, and may be transported for seven years."

This clause is not very correctly drawn. It may seem doubtful, on an inattentive perusal of the first part, whether it is the circumstance of the oath's being administered by a person not lawfully qualified, or the oath's not being in its nature lawful, or undue means being used to cause its being taken;—which of these constitutes the guilt under the statute. But the reader will observe that phrase "solemn engagement" is put in the first part as synonymous with unlawful oath, and unlawful oath is entirely omitted in the second part. I apprehend, therefore, the statute attaches to every oath, however in its form legal, administered by a person not duly qualified\*. With respect to undue means, persuasion is one of the undue means mentioned in the act. No doubt can arise therefore on this head.

It will not be said that this act was levelled against persons of an opposite description to the members of the Orange Clubs. The Legislature, to guard against abuses and evasions, forbids generally all oaths administered by persons not qualified by law. When the Act of Parliament is thus unqualified in the prohibition, it is not for the private individual

\* A gentleman, whose kindness will ever claim my grateful remembrance, as his professional learning must command my respect, informs me there was a resolution of the Judges in support of this interpretation; but his absence on circuit prevented me from obtaining the necessary references.



to say, "I may transgress the general rule delivered in  
 "so many words, because, in my imagination, my case  
 "does not fall within the meaning of the Legislature."  
 My only answer is, Such is the law, and every Irish  
 subject is bound to obey it.

I had thus far proceeded with a cautious step, when  
 the melancholy tidings from the Continent rushed  
 upon my ear. I have endeavoured to impress my  
 mind with a religious sense of the awful task I have  
 undertaken; I know I have all the prejudices of many  
 of the most virtuous of my readers to encounter. It  
 is not without hesitation that I put my pen to paper,  
 to persuade my countrymen to give up the pride, nay,  
 let me call it if I will, the idle boast of a nominal in-  
 dependence. I respect that pride; it is a glorious  
 boast; it is connected with the best feelings, with the  
 noblest passions. Woe to that nation which is not  
 proud!

I have turned the matter over and over again in  
 my mind, and it is from a thorough conscientious  
 conviction, that a Union with Great Britain will be  
 for the happiness of the Irish people, that I have traced  
 the arguments which the reader has perused; it will  
 deliver them from the party government which has  
 long oppressed them; which has pinned their noble  
 faculties to the earth. It will secure a fair unpreju-  
 diced hearing to their grievances; a calm dispassionate  
 discussion to their laws. Irish genius and Irish valour  
 will have room to exert themselves; we shall not be  
 confined

confined to the melancholy task of reading the achievements of our countrymen in some mercenary foreign service, where the eye of the patriot must drop a tear over every victory. Irishmen shall lead the armies of their King and country to battle and to glory.

But after all, every writer in favour of the Union comes in a very questionable shape; his arguments should not only provoke a full and thorough investigation, but should be canvassed with jealousy and suspicion. I have done my duty; I have satisfied my conscience; I have delivered the opinion which I think conducive to the interest of my countrymen, and I have supported it by the reasons which have determined my own mind. It is now for my readers to discharge their duty on their part. The Irishman who assents to an Union, without the fullest conviction on his breast, commits a flagrant crime against God and his country.

But recent events present a more momentous question to our minds. Important as the question of the Union is, there is one of a still higher order of importance. Persons must not deceive themselves; this is not a common war; this is not one of those contests which formerly engaged the attention of Europe, in which the restless, unquiet passions of the human breast were let loose, in struggling for some trifling, often imaginary point of interest, often some punctilio of chimerical honour. This is a prevailing error.



It has arisen, not merely from the voluntary misrepresentations of men who conceive they have an interest in misleading us, but it is very much the offspring of vulgar craft. Shrewd, cunning men, of narrow views and little policy, have been very much the dupes of their own conceited littleness. When the true nature of the war is stated, they give a significant shrug or contemptuous smile, and ridicule such language as the effusion of schoolboy romance. There is no doubt but the French nobleman, who, when titles and armorial bearings were abolished in France, displayed a cloud painted on the arms of his carriage, with the motto, *Ca passera*, hugged himself in the conceit that he had as much wisdom as wit; yet we have seen the consequences; the French nobleman in question is perhaps at this day begging his bread at the door of some proud almoner in a foreign capital; whereas he might be rolling in splendour at home, if he and his brethren had seen clearly the nature of the conjuncture which was about to open upon them. Let, then, the tribe of vulgar mechanical politicians, as I think Burke calls them, be silent. These are not times for the cant of narrow-minded shrewdness; these are not questions that are within the range of their every-day speculations. To save ourselves from destruction, we must rise to an accurate knowledge of our situation. Formerly the zeal and passion of private men, in political discussions, were justly ridiculed. To make use of an expression of Goldsmith, in his pleasant Comedy of *She Stoops to Conquer*: “We had need to trouble  
 “ ourselves as little about Hyder Ally, as about Ally  
 “ Croaker.” But the events of this time have brought  
 political



political questions to the fire-side of the most retired individual. Every person who has a foot of ground in the world, every person who aspires to support himself and family by honest industry, is interested in resisting the conspiracy of desperate adventurers for the destruction of the laws and institutions, which secure to every man the enjoyment of his acquisitions. I do not know any class of men which is not interested. Even to those desperate adventurers themselves, if they are not as regardless of their own lives as they are of all laws human and divine, of the commands of their Maker, and the happiness of their fellow-creatures, I would propose the example of the Duke of Orleans. Did ever the imagination of the most gloomy fanatic conceive so tormenting a hell as must have raged in his breast, when hurried to an ignominious death by those very men whom he had nursed in the bosom of crimes, he cast a last look on the scene of his past greatness and splendour, on the Palais Royal! What must have been his reflections when he thought to what end he had brought himself, and by what means! and yet, if the most prodigal waste of the largest patrimony could secure the friendship of the wicked, it was not among those whose horrible countenances surrounded his bloody scaffold, that he had reason to look for his executioners. If unshaken perseverance in crimes could secure permanent prosperity to wickedness, that atrocious conspirator against his name and blood, might hope for no other punishment but the avenging scorpions of a guilty conscience. He was shackled in the career of his iniquity, neither by principle nor prejudice.

I would advise, therefore, the firmest desperadoes to reflect before they plunge their country into unparalleled wretchedness, by a series of unparalleled crimes. If the Duke of Orleans was too high to affect them by the parallel, let them look at the names of those who began the bloody procession of French crimes. L'Abbé Sieyes is almost the only one who has not either expiated his guilt on the scaffold, or who does not bear about him the singular and merited fate of being detested in wretchedness—who is not at once the needy and abhorred outcast of society.

With respect to all other descriptions of men, I would beseech, I would implore them to forget their animosities in the common cause of their country. This is not the concern of one sect or of one party. Every worshipper of the Deity, at whatever altar he kneels, in whatever form he offers up his supplications to his Maker, must abandon his creed when he abandons the standard to which I would exhort him. Every man who has any regard for good government, whether he is attached to a monarchical or republican form, is interested in repelling the invasion which menaces all the institutions of civil life.

Let the harsh voice of blustering persecution be still. I would not recommend an effeminate mercy—I would not relax the arm of Government—the times require severity; but let public justice be dignified as well as severe. Let the magistrate employ  
 2 the

the rigour of the law, not seem to let loose the impetuous passions of the individual. Let him remember, that violence is not vigour, that cruelty is not severity.

Government, by assuming this dignified attitude, by exerting all the firmness, without any of the acrimony, of a rigorous policy, will best secure the public safety, and baffle the machinations of the factious.

I do not speak this voice of solemn exhortation from affectation or pedantry : when I write I dip my pen in my heart. I am impressed with the most awful sense of the dangers which threaten my country. The events on the Continent have spread a gloom over my mind. It has pleased Providence, whose ways are unsearchable, and who works for ends beyond the limits of human sagacity, by means above the sphere of human comprehension, to give victory to armies arrayed against the civil order of mankind. I came to the undertaking which I have now brought to a conclusion, with other hopes, with a more joyous temper of mind : I looked forward to the exemplary punishment of successful wickedness, for the dissolution of the involuntary scepticism, which, during its prosperity, had stolen upon me.

SÆPE



SÆPE mihi dubiam traxit sententia mentem,  
 Curarent Superi terras, an nullus inesset  
 Rector, & incerto fluerent mortalia casu.  
 Nam cum dispositi quæsissem fœdera mundi,  
 Præscriptosque maris fines, annique meatus,  
 Et lucis, noctisque vices: tunc omnia rebar  
 Consilio firmata Dei, qui lege moveri  
 Sidera, qui fruges diverso tempore nasci,  
 Qui variam Phœben alieno jusserit igne  
 Compleri, solemque suo: porrexerit undis  
 Littora: tellurem medio libraverit axe.  
 Sed cum res hominum tanta caligine volvi  
 Adspicerem, lætosque diu florere nocentes,  
 Vexarique pios: rursus labefacta cadebat  
 Relligio, causæque viam non sponte sequebar  
 Alterius, vacuo quæ currere semina motu  
 Affirmat, magnumque novas per inane figuras  
 Fortuna, non arte, regi: quæ Numina sensu  
 Ambiguo vel nulla putat, vel nescia nostri.  
 Abstulit hunc tandem Rufini pœna tumultum,  
 Absolvitque Deos, jam non ad culmina rerum  
 Injustos crevisse queror, tolluntur in altum,  
 Ut lapsu graviore ruant——

CLAUD. in RUF.

OFTEN have doubts arisen in my mind,  
 Whether a God took care of human kind,  
 Whether eternal Justice rul'd the ball,  
 Or Chance, blind arbitress, directed all.  
 Upwards whene'er I cast my raptur'd eyes,  
 And view'd the structure of the starry skies,  
 Beheld the sun pursue his bright career,  
 And trac'd the wonders of the rolling year,  
 Saw the proud sea its stated tides fulfil,  
 Methought its waves obey'd a Master's will :  
 A God appear'd to guide the vast design :  
 He gave the night to gloom, the day to shine :  
 He cloth'd the moon's dark orb with borrow'd rays ;  
 With native fire supplied the solar blaze ;  
 The seasons He dispos'd in mystic range ;  
 With various fruits adorn'd the grateful change :  
 He bade the waves respect the subject sands,  
 Earth, in the centre, balanc'd with his hands.  
 But when I turn'd my aching sight below,  
 And saw the various forms of human woe—  
 Saw anguish clinging to the virtuous breast,  
 The wicked prosper, and the good oppress,  
 I knew not where the awful truth to find,  
 My faith was stagger'd, and unfix'd my mind ;  
 Spite of myself, strange doubts possess'd my breast,  
 And what my heart abhor'd my head confess :  
 I half believ'd what erring men advance  
 Of crowding atoms and the reign of Chance.  
 My doubts have ceas'd, since I beheld thy fall :  
 A God, 't is sure, Rufinus, governs all.  
 Oft are the wicked lifted up on high,  
 But their success not long insults the sky.

Their

Their fate is fix'd: the higher they ascend,  
The heavier fall awaits them in the end.

CLAUD. *against* RUFINUS\*.

\* I beg the learned reader will forgive this loose translation, or rather imitation. My sole design in the attempt was to give such fair readers as may cast an eye on these pages, some faint notion of the beauties of the original.

THE END.



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